



# Regina Coeli Parish

Beverly Hills - In the Archdiocese of Sydney



## Weekly Newsletter

### Liturgy Times

#### SUNDAY:

8:30am, 10:00am.

Children's Liturgy during school term

**TUESDAY:** 8:30am Adoration, 9.15am Mass

**WEDNESDAY:** 7:00am

**THURSDAY:** 9:15am

**FRIDAY:** 8:30am Adoration, 9.15am Mass

**SATURDAY:** 9:00am

(Adoration and Reconciliation after Mass)

5:00pm (Vigil Mass)

#### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday: 9:30-10:00am; 4:25-4:50pm

## Christmas 25 December 2020

Ours is a time when rescue packages are in high demand, whether they be medical, financial or social in nature. As we speak, all sorts of rescue packages are being conceived, sent and re-sent around the world. When our state premier announced the latest changes to the corona-restrictions, not a small number of people held their breath, as though they were hoping for a package from Santa himself, which could make or break Christmas 2020.

About 2020 years ago, God sent us the most definitive rescue package, once and for all, in the form of a 'babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.' (Luke 2:13) Nevertheless, apart from a handful of people (and some animals), the vast majority of the world's population were oblivious to the immeasurable value of the truly unprecedented gift from God; even the cosmos noticed it but not the people! This did not mean that the value of the gift was anything less than infinite; after all, the impact of the first Christmas would go on to be felt by countless lives and reverberate through the human psyche for centuries. But it did mean that being able to recognise the sublime value of the rescue package from above could never be taken for granted by anyone.

Saying that this has been a challenging year might have lost some of its meaning, not least because it has been said at least a thousand times! No doubt, different people have felt challenged in different ways, with everyone fighting their own unique battles to various degrees of success. But there have also been some common elements in our collective hardship over the past 12 months and one of them might have to do with this: it feels as though the course of history is about to change quite significantly, if the process for this hasn't started already. It feels like the end of an era or the end of something even bigger. Things will probably not be the same again, but the fact that we are fumbling in the dark, unable to see the future, makes us feel rather vulnerable. And this adds greatly to our distress.

*'The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone.'* (Isaiah 9:1)

What kind of light shone through the first Christmas - the heavenly rescue package - such that it overcame darkness without being overbearing to those who were searching? What kind of people were able to let themselves be guided by that light and arrive precisely where they were meant to be, such that they could participate in the unfolding of God's story? What kind of power captivated the imagination of so many Christians over the centuries and made them feel confident that, in spite of all that was wrong in our world, the peace commanded by the little child of Bethlehem was invincible - finally capable of guiding the course of history in the right direction? Happy Christmas!

- Fr Peter -

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## First Reading Is 62:1-5

*The Lord takes delight in you.*

About Zion I will not be silent,  
about Jerusalem I will not grow weary,  
until her integrity shines out like the dawn  
and her salvation flames like a torch.  
The nations then will see your integrity,  
all the kings your glory,  
and you will be called by a new name,  
one which the mouth of the Lord will confer.  
You are to be a crown of splendour in the hand  
of the Lord,  
a princely diadem in the hand of your God;  
no longer are you to be named 'Forsaken',  
nor your land 'Abandoned',  
but you shall be called 'My Delight'  
and your land 'The Wedded';  
for the Lord takes delight in you  
and your land will have its wedding.  
Like a young man marrying a virgin,  
so will the one who built you wed you,  
and as the bridegroom rejoices in his bride,  
so will your God rejoice in you.

## Responsorial Psalm

**Ps 88:4-5. 16-17. 27. 29 R. see v.2**

**(R.) For ever I will sing the goodness  
of the Lord.**

1. 'I have made a covenant with my  
chosen one;  
I have sworn to David my servant:  
I will establish your dynasty for ever  
and set up your throne through  
all ages.' (R.)
2. Happy the people who acclaim  
such a king,  
who walk, O Lord, in the light of  
your face,  
who find their joy every day in your name,  
who make your justice the source of their  
bliss. (R.)
3. 'He will say to me: "You are my father,  
my God, the rock who saves me."  
I will keep my love for him always;  
for him my covenant shall endure.' (R.)

## Second Reading Acts 13:16-17. 22-25

*Paul spoke of Christ, the son of David.*

When Paul reached Antioch in Pisidia, he stood  
up in the synagogue, held up a hand for silence  
and began to speak:

'Men of Israel, and fearers of God, listen! The  
God of our nation Israel chose our ancestors,  
and made our people great when they were living  
as foreigners in Egypt; then by divine power he  
led them out.

'Then he made David their king, of whom he  
approved in these words, "I have selected  
David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart,  
who will carry out my whole purpose". To keep  
his promise, God has raised up for Israel one  
of David's descendants, Jesus, as Saviour,  
whose coming was heralded by John when he  
proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the  
whole people of Israel. Before John ended his  
career he said, "I am not the one you imagine  
me to be; that one is coming after me and I am  
not fit to undo his sandal".'

## Gospel Acclamation Mt 1:1-25

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Tomorrow the wickedness of the  
earth will be destroyed:  
the Saviour of the world will be  
our king.**

**Alleluia!**

## Gospel Mt 1:18-25

**(or Longer Form Mt 1:1-25)**

*Mary will give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus.*

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His  
mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but  
before they came to live together she was found  
to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her  
husband Joseph, being a man of honour and  
wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce  
her informally. He had made up his mind to do  
this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him  
in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do  
not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife,  
because she has conceived what is in her by the  
Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you  
must name him Jesus, because he is the one  
who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all  
this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the  
Lord through the prophet:

The Virgin will conceive and give birth to a son  
and they will call him Emmanuel,

a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. When  
Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the  
Lord told him to do: he took his wife to his home  
and, though he had not had intercourse with  
her, she gave birth to a son; and he named him  
Jesus.



## Reflection by Dianne Bergant CSA

As we stand at the threshold of  
Christmas, we reflect on the theme of  
covenant. Out of inexplicable love, God  
established a covenant with us, one  
that is best characterised with  
marriage imagery. The love reflected  
in such imagery is the basis of  
everything that has transpired in  
history and that will unfold in the  
future. Because of this love, God  
promised to send a saviour, and  
throughout the history of a particular  
people, God moved to bring that  
promise to fulfilment. The promises of  
God are realised in actual human  
history.

The Incarnation is grounded in belief  
that Jesus is not only the Son of God,  
but also a real human being.  
Therefore, it is important to be able to  
situate him in history, to know his  
family, his ancestry. Often when the  
gospel writers proclaim some of the  
wondrous aspects of Jesus, they also  
underscore his human origins. Though  
he might be misunderstood, he was  
still in many ways a man like other  
men, a vulnerable child like other  
children. The Incarnation assures us  
that God does not love us despite our  
humanity. Rather, it is precisely  
through it that we know God's love.

Finally, today we realise that the  
promises of God blossom in the soil of  
vulnerability. Though covenants were  
made with a people or a family, they  
are brought to completion in a child  
whose birth was shrouded in  
misunderstanding. He will be our  
saviour, he will be 'God with us', but  
he will still always be a mystery of  
God's own vulnerability.

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## First Reading Is 9:1-7

*A son is given to us.*

The people that walked in darkness  
has seen a great light;  
on those who live in a land of deep shadow  
a light has shone.  
You have made their gladness greater,  
you have made their joy increase;  
they rejoice in your presence  
as men rejoice at harvest time,  
as men are happy when they are dividing the  
spoils.  
For the yoke that was weighing on him,  
the bar across his shoulders,  
the rod of his oppressor,  
these you break as on the day of Midian.  
For all the footgear of battle,  
every cloak rolled in blood,  
is burnt  
and consumed by fire.  
For there is a child born for us,  
a son given to us  
and dominion is laid on his shoulders;  
and this is the name they give him:  
Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God,  
Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.  
Wide is his dominion  
in a peace that has no end,  
for the throne of David  
and for his royal power,  
which he establishes and makes secure  
in justice and integrity.  
From this time onwards and for ever,  
the jealous love of the Lord of hosts  
will do this.

## Responsorial Psalm

**Ps 95:1-3. 11-13 R. Lk 2:11**

**(R.) Today is born our Saviour,  
Christ the Lord.**

1. O sing a new song to the Lord,  
sing to the Lord all the earth.  
O sing to the Lord, bless his name. (R.)
2. Proclaim his help day by day,  
tell among the nations his glory  
and his wonders among all  
the peoples. (R.)
3. Let the heavens rejoice and earth  
be glad,  
let the sea and all within it thunder praise,  
let the land and all it bears rejoice,  
all the trees of the wood shout for joy  
at the presence of the Lord  
for he comes,  
he comes to rule the earth. (R.)
4. With justice he will rule the world,  
he will judge the peoples with  
his truth (R.)

## Second Reading Ti 2:11-14

*God's grace has been revealed to all people.*

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made  
salvation possible for the whole human race and  
taught us that what we have to do is to give up  
everything that does not lead to God, and all our  
worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained  
and live good and religious lives here in this  
present world, while we are waiting in hope for  
the blessing which will come with the Appearing  
of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ  
Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to  
set us free from all wickedness and to purify  
a people so that it could be his very own and  
would have no ambition except to do good.

## Gospel Acclamation Lk 2:10-11

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Good News and great joy to all  
the world:**

**today is born our Saviour, Christ  
the Lord.**

**Alleluia!**

## Gospel Lk 2:1-14

*Today a saviour has been born for you.*

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of  
the whole world to be taken. This census – the  
first – took place while Quirinius was governor of  
Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be  
registered. So Joseph set out from the town of  
Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea,  
to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he  
was of David's House and line, in order to be  
registered together with Mary, his betrothed,  
who was with child. While they were there the  
time came for her to have her child, and she gave  
birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him  
in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger  
because there was no room for them at the inn.  
In the countryside close by there were shepherds  
who lived in the fields and took it in turns to  
watch their flocks during the night. The angel  
of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of  
the Lord shone round them. They were terrified,  
but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen,  
I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared  
by the whole people. Today in the town of David  
a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the  
Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a  
baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a  
manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was  
a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God  
and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven  
and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

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## Reflection by Dianne Bergant CSA

The Gospel situates the birth of  
Jesus within Roman rule of the first  
century. Through the Incarnation, the  
ordinary becomes transparent and  
reveals the extraordinary; the divine  
is known in the child. Only those of  
humble heart experience this  
wonder. They behold it and they  
come to embrace it. In fact, it is the  
nature of this child, born in history, to  
reverse the orders of power.

God is portrayed as a valiant liberator  
who champions the cause of justice  
and who brings a liberation that  
reverses history and the ways of war,  
power and oppression. This reversal  
is made more shocking by the fact  
that the one who is the mighty  
warrior and conqueror of the nations  
is a child. This child is the weak and  
voiceless one, the one who has  
neither power nor legal rights. God's  
reversal of the long-standing realities  
of this world is accomplished through  
the apparently insignificant, through  
the gift of this child who is given to us  
in the middle of the night.

Something new has happened: the  
age of God's fulfilment has arrived.  
The age of grace and fresh hope,  
made available to all people of good  
will, is an era of redemptive  
presence. Now all people can walk in  
the newness of life and grace. Yet,  
while this new age has begun, it is  
not yet fully realised. We live  
believing in its presence and awaiting  
its fulfilment. Although we are  
celebrating Christmas, we still await  
the final coming of the Lord.



## First Reading Is 52:7-10

*All the ends of the earth shall see the saving power of our God.*

How beautiful on the mountains,  
are the feet of one who brings good news,  
who heralds peace, brings happiness,  
proclaims salvation,  
and tells Zion,  
'Your God is king!'  
Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices,  
they shout for joy together,  
for they see the Lord face to face,  
as he returns to Zion.  
Break into shouts of joy together,  
you ruins of Jerusalem;  
for the Lord is consoling his people,  
redeeming Jerusalem.  
The Lord bares his holy arm  
in the sight of all the nations,  
and all the ends of the earth shall see  
the salvation of our God.

## Responsorial Psalm

**Ps 97:1-6 R.v.3**

*(R.) All the ends of the earth have seen  
the saving power of God.*

1. Sing a new song to the Lord  
for he has worked wonders.  
His right hand and his holy arm  
have brought salvation. (R.)
2. The Lord has made known his salvation;  
has shown his justice to the nations.  
He has remembered his truth and love  
for the house of Israel. (R.)
3. All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.  
Shout to the Lord all the earth,  
ring out your joy. (R.)
4. Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp,  
with the sound of music.  
With trumpets and the sound of the horn  
acclaim the King, the Lord. (R.)

## Second Reading Heb 1:1-6

*In our own time, God speaks to us through his Son.*

At various times in the past and in various  
different ways, God spoke to our ancestors  
through the prophets; but in our own time,  
the last days, he has spoken to us through  
his Son, the Son that he has appointed to  
inherit everything and through whom he  
made everything there is. He is the radiant  
light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his  
nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful  
command; and now that he has destroyed the  
defilement of sin, he has gone to take his place  
in heaven at the right hand of divine Majesty.  
So he is now as far above the angels as the title

which he has inherited is higher than their own  
name.

God has never said to any angel: You are my  
Son, today I have become your father, or: I will  
be a father to him and he a son to me. Again,  
when he brings the First-born into the world, he  
says: Let all the angels of God worship him.

## Gospel Acclamation

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

**A holy day has dawned upon us.**

**Come you nations and adore the Lord,  
Today a great light has come  
upon the earth.**

**Alleluia!**

## Gospel Jn 1:1-18

*(or Shorter Form Jn 1:1-5. 9-14)*

*The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us, and we  
saw his glory.*

In the beginning was the Word:  
the Word was with God  
and the Word was God.  
He was with God in the beginning.  
Through him all things came to be,  
not one thing had its being but through him.  
All that came to be had life in him  
and that life was the light of men,  
a light that shines in the dark,  
a light that darkness could not overpower.

The Word was the true light  
that enlightens all men;  
and he was coming into the world.  
He was in the world  
that had its being through him,  
and the world did not know him.  
He came to his own domain  
and his own people did not accept him.  
But to all who did accept him  
he gave power to become children of God,  
to all who believe in the name of him  
who was born not out of human stock  
or urge of the flesh  
or will of man  
but of God himself.  
The Word was made flesh,  
he lived among us.  
And we saw his glory,  
the glory that is his as the only Son of the  
Father,  
full of grace and truth.



## Reflection by Dianne Bergant CSA

Today the Christmas celebration  
gains a new depth of theological  
meaning. At midnight, the birth in  
history was proclaimed. At dawn,  
the initiative of God's gift was  
declared and the community's joyful  
gratitude was announced. In this  
third celebration, the identity of  
Christ and the new way of life that  
he brings is announced.

If our eyes are open and alert, we  
can see that God has won a victory  
for us, one that is tangible and  
realised in our midst. It is an  
overwhelming victory, one that  
permanently conquers the enemy.  
This victory has a profound impact  
on every place, every time and every  
people. The birth of the infant, the  
king in David's line, promises  
salvation to all who long for it. This  
salvation is a new vision of wisdom,  
one that has been realised in Christ,  
God's agent of grace in the world. It  
is a new world, one of inclusivity and  
of righteous honour. It is a new age,  
one that is ushered in by the child  
who is leading a victory procession.

Ultimately, only eyes of faith allow  
us to see the fullness of God's  
revelation. The glory of the infant  
king is the very presence of God  
made flesh. Jesus is the eternal  
incarnate Word who has pitched his  
tent among us. Ours is not a distant  
God; the incarnate wisdom of God is  
among us, and we are called to a  
change of heart that will allow us to  
see this wonder.

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